DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 378 879 HE 028 028

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TITLE Patterns of Governance in Higher Education Concepts and Trends. New Papers on Higher Education: Studies and Research 9.
INSTITUTION United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Paris (France).
REPORT NO ED-93/WS-18
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 52p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Administration; Developed Nations; *Developing Nations; Educational Administration; Educational Quality; *Educational Trends; Foreign Countries; Free Enterprise System; *Governance; Government Role; Government School Relationship; *Higher Education; Literature Reviews; Management Systems; Organizations (Groups)

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a review of the literature on governance and management of higher education, offers a set of concepts for discussion on higher education governance, and identifies recent trends that might have a significant influence on the development of higher education systems. It examines the dynamics of higher education systems, focusing on the distribution of authority, the possibilities of market coordination, governmental steering strategies, the role of buffer organizations, management processes, and educational quality. The paper concludes by discussing the issue of governance in higher education in the context of developments and problems in developing nations. It argues that certain major changes, such as deregulation, decentralization, and a decreased government role, are needed to solve the present crisis in higher education in developing nations. (Contains 64 references.) (MDM)

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New Papers on Higher Education

Studies and Research

9

Patterns of Governance in Higher Education Concepts and Trends

A study conducted by
Frans van Vught
Center for Higher Education Policy Studies

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Paris, 1993

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Published in 1993
by the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and cultural Organization
7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP

ED-93/WS-18
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UNESCO's activity in the field of higher education is centred on two major axes:

- the analysis of current trends and issues related to higher education policy-making;

- the promotion of co-operation between Member States and between institutions of higher learning so that information exchange, training and research will be strengthened.

In this manner, national systems will be renovated and institutions will adopt more innovative managerial practices in order that both can meet the complex challenges which distinguish the domain of higher education in the 1990s.

This activity is carried out for UNESCO by the Division of Higher Education in close collaboration with the Organization's regional offices and specialized centres for higher education, notably the International Institute for Educational Planning, CEPES (Bucharest) and CRESALC (Caracas).

Amongst the major policy issues today, the most problematical include:

- the assurance of quality and relevance and employment;
- the provision of access for increasing numbers of students;
- the financing of higher education;
- the diversification of systems;
- the linkages between higher education and employment;
- the renovation of systemic and institutional management;
- the internationalization of higher education.

The present study has been carried out by Professor Frans van Vught of the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies, University of Twente, the Netherlands. It focuses on key aspects related to the changing field of higher education governance. Since both national systems and institutions are seeking managerial strategies which are both innovative yet more effective, this subject is of the greatest significance for higher education policy analysis today.

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Summary

In this paper some of the relevant concepts and trends regarding governance in higher education are addressed. The perspective chosen to analyse the issue of higher education governance is the one from the discipline of public adminstration and policy analysis.

The objectives of this paper are: to present a review on the literature on governance and management of higher education, to offer a set of relevant concepts for a discussion on higher education governance, and to identify the trends that might have a significant influence on the development of higher education systems.

The subjects covered in this paper are: the dynamics of higher education systems (and especially processes of differentiation within these system), the distribution of authority in higher education systems, the possibilities of market coordination in higher education, relevant governmental steering strategies in higher education, the role of buffer organisations in higher education systems, the processes of management in the higher education institutions and the issue of quality in higher education. In the concluding paragraph the issue of governance in higher education is specifically discussed in the context of the developments and problems in developing nations.

In paragraph one the dynamics of a higher education system are analysed as a continuous product of a set of interdependent elements of that system. The most important elements are: the (various types of) higher education institutions, one or more governmental bodies and (if existing) one or more intermediary organizations. From a certain point of view the 'consumers' of the higher education institutions may also be seen as specific elements of the system.

It is argued in this paragraph that the stability of higher education systems is an effect of the process of differentiation in higher education. In higher education the division of labour is based on professional knowledge and this produces diversity and structural disintegration which in turn protect the equilibrium of the whole. Pressures and conflicts produced by increasing professionalism and specialization are met with increasing differentiation.

The process of differentiation is judged to be relevant in higher education practice. It is assumed to offer several benefits, including making higher education available to a large clientele, increasing the range of choices for learners, matching education to the needs and abilities of individual students and responding to the needs and pressures of society. Especially the last benefit is often assumed to be highly relevant for higher education policy- making. Governments often try to influence the dynamics of the higher education system, hoping to make it more flexible, adaptive and responsive to societal needs.

The differentiation process which is the result of the increasing specialization of 'knowledge domains', is called here the *informal* process of differentiation. The *formal* differentiation processes concern the differences between types of higher education institutions as regarding their (formal) tasks. A certain level of formal differentiation often is a governmental objective in higher education. Governments try to allocate sets of specific tasks to specific types of institutions.

In the higher education literature higher education systems are assumed to display a dynamic towards integration. Higher education institutions are assumed to be driven by self-interest. Non-university institutions try to acquire the level of status and funding of the universities ('academic drift'). Universities develop and implement applied and professional study-programmes ('professional shift').

It appears that the processes of informal and formal differentiation move into opposite directions. While informal differentiation is stimulated by the immanent process of specialization in knowledge domains, formal differentiation appears to be under the pressure of institutional ambitions.

The dynamics of higher education systems are often seen as object for governance processes in higher education. In this paper governance is discussed from a 'multi-actor perspective'. In higher education systems *patterns* of governance are assumed to be the specific combinations of the actions of, and the interactions between several categories of actors (higher education institutions, professionals working within these institutions, governmental actors, intermediate organisations, students, employers, contractors).

In paragraph two the concept of authority is addressed. In higher education authority ultimately is derived from knowledge. In higher education systems the handling of knowledge is the most crucial activity. From this core activity a number of organisational principles can be derived that are fundamental for higher education institutions. The principles are: the fragmented organisational structure of higher education institutions, the diffusion of the decision-making power in these institutions, the incremental nature of innovation processes and (especially in systems based on the continental European model) the relative weakness of institutional adminstration.

Regarding the relationships between higher education institutions and governmental steering strategies, two extreme general models appear to exist. One is the 'bottom-up' model where government policy follows rather than leads change processes initiated in institutions. The other is the 'top-down' model where institutions merely respond to governmental policy initiatives. Of course many specific models can be found in between these two extremes.

Two crucial concepts that are related to the way authority is structured in higher education are 'autonomy' and 'academic freedom'. Academic freedom is the freedom of the individual scholar in his/her teaching and research to pursue truth wherever it seems to lead without fear of punishment or termination of employment for having offended political, religious and social orthodoxy. Autonomy

can be distinguished in two subconcepts. Substantive autonomy is the power of the university or college in its corporate form to determine its own goals and programmes. Procedural autonomy is the power of the university or college to determine the means by which its goals and programmes will be pursued. For an analysis of patterns of governance in higher education it is important to know whether governments are intervening only in procedural autonomy or in procedural *and* substantive autonomy.

In paragraph three the question is raised to what extent the market can be an effective mechanism of coordination in higher education. The market is a concept which is basically different from the idea of governmental steering. The market is a form of interaction in which, in its pure form, no one is in charge and matters are desegregated. A crucial aspect of governmental steering concerns the efforts of government to influence the behaviour of other actors.

In the higher education literature there are strong opponents and strong defenders of the mechanism of market coordination in higher education. Both groups appear to have good arguments. The conclusion must be that the concept of markets in higher education is best addressed by focusing on the extent to which market-like elements (most prominently competition) are part of the overall workings of higher education systems. Regarding these market-like elements different conceptualizations of market can be distinguished: consumer markets, labour markets, institutions markets. Also, different roles of various categories of actors are involved.

Market-like processes are important in higher education, but governments have a role to play. In higher education market coordination and governmental steering are combined into specific patterns of governance.

Paragraph four discusses governmental steering strategies in higher education. Two primary traditions in government steering of higher education are identified: the 'state control model' and the 'state supervising model'. Both models are discussed in some detail.

Especially in Western Europe a development in governmental steering from state control to state supervision is visible. There is some evidence that this shift should be judged positively. The state supervising model appears to be better suited for the higher education context and is better able to stimulate innovative behaviour in higher education systems.

The shift towards the state supervision model has not been without its trade-offs. While giving higher education institutions more autonomy, governments demand from these institutions the enhancement of internal efficiency and effectiveness and the institutionalization of measures to assure accountability and quality.

In paragraph four also a number of trends is presented regarding the use of governmental instruments in higher education. With respect to *funding*, it is first

pointed out that funding levels have either remained stable or have fallen in nearly all countries. Secondly, governments appear to stimulate institutions to diversify their funding base. Third, several governments appear to move away from earmarked funding to the allocation of block grants. Fourth, in several countries the approach of 'conditional contracting' in being introduced. Fifth, several governments are introducing user-pays schemes for higher education.

Regarding the governmental instrument of *planning*, a shift is identified from detailed centralized planning towards conceptions of communicative planning and forms of 'remote control'. Concerning the instrument of *evaluation*, a development from input- towards output-evaluation is becoming visible. With respect to the instrument of *regulation*, the trend appears to be deregulation.

In paragraph five buffer organisations in higher educations are discussed. It is pointed out that, in the context of overall governance patterns, buffer organisations in higher education are rather vulnerable. Only if a buffer organisation can sustain itself as a neutral body, standing between the government and the higher education institutions, can it keep legitimacy in the eyes of both sides.

In several countries buffer organisations appear either to be transformed to serve more directly government interests, or to be removed. However, there is little evidence to suggest that the transformation or removal of buffer organisations has challenged institutional autonomy.

In paragraph six the management processes in higher education institutions are explored.

The move away from the governmental steering strategy of state control towards the strategy of state supervision involves a substantial strengthening of the management of higher education institutions. Such a strengthening is accomplished by several means: through changes in the composition of governing bodies to make them similar to company-like boards, through the streamlining of decision-making within institutions, providing greater authority to chief executive officers, and through changing the nature, task and role of the democratic institutional senates and councils. This model of *'managerial professionalism'* brings along several features, especially the increased influence of external interests (regional industry, social partners), the growing attention for strategic management approaches and the extension of management accountability.

At the institutional level the same instruments can be distinguished which were mentioned above. With respect to *funding* the budgetary expertise will have to increase, which will bring along more attention for internal allocation models, for incentives to increase efficiency and for procedures of internal accountability. Regarding the instrument of *planning*, the need to set priorities and to identify future strategies forces higher education institutions to engage in the procedures and techniques of strategic planning (which, by the way, cannot automatically be taken over from the private sector). As institutions take more responsibility for setting their own missions, *evaluation* assumes greater importance. Especially

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internal research management and internal educational quality assessment require a growing emphasis on evaluation methods. With respect to *regulation*, institutions are assumed to take the responsibility of the regulatory frameworks that were before administered by the state.

Paragraph seven addresses the issue of quality in higher education. This issue has mushroomed as a priority on the higher education political agenda nearly everywhere. Quality is a relative concept. It is multidimensional, interpretative and contextually determined. Quality in higher education can only be defined in relation to a set of goals, both at the level of the higher education system and at the institutional level. From this perspective, the concepts of quality and relevance converge. Quality relates to the degree to which an institution (or system) is fulfilling its goals. Relevance relates to the degree to which institutional goals are applicable to the needs and demands of society. Given society's investment in higher education quality and relevance must be assured.

Evidence suggests that the details of higher education missions are best left to the institutions themselves, while the task of government is to set the broad parameters (the social relevance) in which these goals are to be pursued. Higher education quality assessment therefore should be organised in such a way that both the institutions and government can play their own roles. The tasks of government are to make sure that the institutions themselves will operate a quality assessment system, that the needs of society are addressed in that operation and the institutions respond to social demand. The actual design and operation of a quality assessment system can be left to the institutions themselves. They should use their autonomy to discuss and judge the levels of quality of the various teaching and research programmes that are executed by units within the institutions.

In paragraph seven it is pointed out that the institutionalisation of quality management is a crucial aspect of the pattern of governance in higher education. Two issues are crucial here. One concerns the degree to which the bodies that are involved with the management of quality assessment are independent of both government and the higher education institutions. The second issue concerns the relationships between quality assessment and funding decisions.

In the final paragraph, paragraph eight, the issue of higher education governance is discussed in the context of developing nations. It is argued that in many developing nations, higher education is in crisis. During the last decades the enrolments have increased enormously in these countries while the public resources for higher education have hardly grown. The effects are dramatic: declining quality in teaching and research, inadequate staffing, overcrowding, deteriorating physical facilities, poor library resources, insufficient equipment. Besides, the internal efficiency of many higher education systems appears to be low, while, in terms of external efficiency, many developing nations are confronted with structural graduate unemployment. In the political arena student revolts appear to be a major political force.

The higher education systems of the developing nations have come about through transplantation of especially European models under colonial rule. This forced transplantation has created problems of adaptation when the developing countries entered their era of independence. The transplanted systems appeared to be alien to the social structure and culture of the newly independent nations and often intensified slumbering social and political conflicts. The heritage of the European models of higher education more and more became a form of culture dependence.

In many developing nations the reaction has been to increase the power of government with respect to higher education. Many new nations wanted to use their higher education systems as instruments for national development, thereby forcing their higher education institutions to adapt themselves to local needs and circumstances.

The effect of this forced adaptation has been the clear predominance of the state control model in many developing nations, often leading to rather an authoritarian governmental attitude towards higher education institutions.

In developing nations the governance patterns in higher education are to a large extent dominated by the centralised and hierarchical strategies of government. Taking the various trends into account that are presented in this paper (on issues like market coordination, the shift towards state supervision, the position of buffer organisations and the changing management processes in higher education institutions), if may be concluded that certain major changes in the overall approaches to governance in higher education systems in developing nations are needed to solve the present crisis in higher education in these countries. Crucial in these changes will have to be the process of deregulation and the stepping back of government. In the higher education governance patterns in developing nations the autonomy of the higher education institutions should be increased and the management processes in these institutions should be professionalised. Also, more attention should be given to the possibilities of market-coordination and to the advantages of competition in higher education systems. The position of buffer organisations should be as independent as possible and the influence of the 'academic oligarchy' should be clearly organised. If effective policies can be developed with regard to these issues, the future of higher education in developing nations may be less dramatic than the present crisis appears to suggest.

Introduction

This paper addresses some of the relevant concepts and trends with respect to the issue of governance in higher education. Governance is a complex phenomenon. It concerns not only the steering strategies that are used by governments to influence higher education systems, it also asks attention for the behaviour of higher education institutions, for the authority of the academic professionals and for the management processes that go on within these institutions. Besides, it concentrates on market-like processes in higher education and on the influences that various categories of consumers and stakeholders can have on the processes and outcomes of higher education.

Developments in higher education in general, and certainly also regarding the questions of governance, can be analyzed from a multitude of perspectives. In this paper a perspective is chosen from the discipline of public administration and policy analysis. Using the literature form this discipline (Van Vught, 1992), a discussion is presented on various aspects of governance in higher education that may be relevant for the actual processes of policy-development and policy-implementation in higher education.

The objectives of this paper are: to present a review of the literature on governance and management of higher education, to offer a set of relevant concepts for a discussion on higher education governance, and to identify the trends in this field that might have a significant influence on the development of higher education systems.

This paper focuses on governance issues in higher education systems in general, both in developed and in developing countries. The concepts and trends that are presented are to a large extent deduced from the literature on higher education in Western industrialised nations. Unfortunately, the literature on higher education governance in developing nations offers only limited possibilities to discuss governance issues in higher education. Nevertheless, the concepts and trends presented here are assumed relevant to these issues in developing countries as well. In the final paragraph of this paper the question of higher education governance in developing nations is specifically addressed.

1 Higher education system dynamics

In the literature on higher education, the systems approach is widely used. Higher education is seen as a system (for instance: Clark, 1983; Becher & Kogan, 1991) and structures and processes in higher education are analysed from a systems point of view. In this paragraph, I will use this systems approach. And I will especially focus on a general process that could help explain the dynamics of higher education systems: the **process of differentiation**.

Generally speaking, a system can be described as any entity which consists of interdependent parts. In this sense, higher education can certainly be defined as a system. Higher education is a **behavioral** system. It consists of parts, each of which displays behaviour. When we try to analyze the dynamics of a system, we are concerned with the behaviour of the elements (parts) of the system and their interactions. The dynamics of the overall system may be perceived as the results of the interdependent acts of the parts. The dynamics of a system are the continuous product of a set of interdependent acts of the elements that together form the system. In a higher education system the most important parts are: the - various types of - higher education institutions, one for more governmental bodies and (if existing) one or more intermediary organisations. From a certain perspective, the 'consumers' of the higher education institutions (students, employers, contractors) may also be seen as specific entities of the system. To illustrate the dynamics of higher education systems, I will especially focus on a certain type of dynamics which is mainly the product of the behaviour of higher education institutions and governmental bodies, i.e. the process of differentiation.

The literature on higher education often emphasizes the remarkable stability of higher education systems over most of its extensive history. Kerr, for example, observes that 'About eighty-five institutions in the Western world established by 1520 still exist in recognisable forms, with similar functions and unbroken histories, including the Catholic church, the parliaments of the Isle of Man, of Iceland and of Great Britain, several Swiss cantons, and seventy universities. Kings that rule, feudal lords with vassals, guilds with monopolies are gone. These seventy universities, however, are still in the same locations with some of the

same buildings, with professors and students doing much the same things, and with governance carried on in much the same ways' (Kerr, 1982: 152). A number of authors have argued that it is the process of differentiation in higher education that provides its stability. The thesis is that the division of labour in higher education based on professional knowledge and professional expertise produces diversity and structural disintegration, which in turn protect the equilibrium of the whole. A national system of higher education can be regarded as a set of disciplines and professions, but each isolated from the other, and with its own particular set of norms, values and cultures. 'The harsh fact is that those who handle the materials of microbiology and those who deal in medieval history do not need one another to get on with the work, either in teaching or research or service' (Clark, 1983: 14,15). Pressures and conflicts produced by increasing professionalism and specialization in higher education have been met with increasing differentiation, not unification. 'In separating tasks, specialization pulls apart groups that otherwise may have to fight it out ...'; biochemists and chemists do not have to fight over turf within a chemistry department if biochemists can develop their specialty to the point of a separate department' (Clark 1983: 219).

The idea that groups in potential or actual competition with one another create boundaries between themselves in order to avoid direct conflict and possible defeat is a central sociological construct (cf. Durkheim's theory of the division of labour in modern society). In the literature on higher education is has proved to be a very useful idea to explain the remarkable stability of higher education systems. Birnbaum (1983) makes this point quite clear by drawing on a biological metaphor. According to Birnbaum, differentiation 'leads to stability that protects the system itself. Species diversity must be maintained to ensure the specialized functions upon which the system depends and to prevent the unpredictable breakdown of the system if a critical element is removed. Evolution of the system occurs as organisations seek their resources within available niches; those most fitted to a particular niche survive' (Birnbaum, 1983).

Also in practice, the process of differentiation is often judged to be highly relevant in higher education. Stadtman (1980) has listed six benefits of differentiation processes in higher education systems:

1 it increases the range of choices available to learners;
2 it makes higher education available to virtually everyone;
3 it matches education to the needs and abilities of individual students;
4 it enables institutions to select their own mission and confine their activities;
5 it responds to the pressures of a society (complex and diversified in itself);
6 it becomes a precondition of college and university freedom and autonomy.

In the context of a discussion on issues of governance and management in higher education especially Stadtman's fifth benefit deserves our attention. Government policies with respect to higher education, both in developed and in developing

nations, often have the stated intention of creating higher education systems that are more flexible, adaptive and responsive to societal needs and economic priorities. Complex societies and differentiated economic markets display a wide variety of needs that, supposedly, cannot be fulfilled by a single type of higher education institution. Hence the need to differentiate. Systems that are more diversified are better able to respond to a wide variety of needs. In this respect it is often claimed that the strength of the American system of higher education lies in its diversity. According to the Carnegie Council (1987:2), 'we (i.e. the USA) celebrate the diversity, acknowledging that our system of higher education is the envy of the world ..'

As was indicated before, in higher education systems an immanent process of differentiation seems to exist which is related to the increasing specialization of 'knowledge domains' and which not only helps to avoid conflicts but also leads to a high level of stability of the system. I will call this the **informal** process of differentiation. Informal differentiation processes may be assumed to be the result of the behaviour of (groups of) academic professionals who try to maximize their discretion by extreme specialization of their knowledge domains.

Except for these informal processes of differentiation, also **formal** differentiation processes can be distinguished. At the system's level, formal differentiation concerns the differences between types of higher education institutions as regards their (formal) tasks.

In many countries all over the world, an important discussion in governmental higher education policies is related to the question what tasks to allocate to universities and what higher education functions to place in other types of institutions. Very often, governments allocate sets of specific tasks to specific types of institutions. By doing so governments try to create a certain level of formal differentiation (at the system's level). The more types of higher education institutions in this sense can be distinguished, the higher the level of formal differentiation.

In the higher education literature it is sometimes argued that 'all systems of higher education display a dynamic towards integration' (Neave, 1983). While governments may be aimed at sustaining a formally differentiated system, 'there is nevertheless', according to Neave, 'an undisputable move towards integration, even though from the policy-makers perspective, it constitutes a regression toward the priorities, values and practices found in the "noble'[university] sector'.

Implied in Neave's statement is the hypothesis that the behaviour of higher education institutions has a major impact on the overall dynamics of a higher education system. Institutional self-interest in the context of the spread of benefits from a limited pool of resources, is an important variable for the explanation of formal processes of differentiation (or de-differentiation) at the system's level. The wish of non-university institutions to acquire similar levels of status and funding as the universities (sometimes indicated as '**academic drift**') (Pratt & Burgess, 1974), but also the tendency of university institutions to develop and implement

study-programmes that are assumed to lead to rather applied professional qualifications (sometimes called '**professional shift**') (Youll & Brennan, 1988) may lead to specific patterns and levels of differentiation of the overall higher education system.

Clearly in some countries institutional ambition and formal differentiation have worked against each other. This seems to be particularly the case for the binary systems in Australia and the United Kingdom, which have both recently collapsed, mostly under the weight of the campaign by non-university institutions to gain funding parity and equal status with universities. In these countries the universities on the one hand and the colleges of advanced education (in Australia) and polytechnics (in the U.K.) on the other taught much the same type and level of course and recruited more or less form the same pool of students. However, compared to the universities, the colleges/polytechnics received clearly less financial and social benefits. Driven by their ambition, the non-university institutions challenged the formally based binary structure. The result has been the coming into existence of a unitary system in which the level of formal differentiation is reduced.

Another example is found in the binary higher education system of the Netherlands where the relationship between the universities and the non-university institutions for higher vocational education is under pressure. The latter challenge the monopoly of the universities with respect to some of the tasks traditionally assigned to the universities, like doing research and having the right to award Ph.D. degrees. The outcome might be that also in the Netherlands the binary system is replaced by a unitary system.

In contrast, the complex tripartite structure of the public higher education system of a U.S. state like California has been held together by formal legislative decision. One could almost view the Californian system as a treaty of mutual benefit between the three public sector higher education domains (the University of California, the California State University and the California community colleges). But even in the relatively stable Californian higher education system tensions exist between the different types of institutions, especially as a consequence of the ambitions of some of the California State Universities to enter the domain assigned in the 1960 Master Plan to the University of California institutions.

It may have become clear from the discussion above, that the processes of informal and formal differentiation may move into opposite directions. While informal differentiation is stimulated by the immanent process of specialization in knowledge domains, formal differentiation appears to be under the pressure of institutional ambitions.

Turning back to the intention of many governments, in developed as well as in developing nations, to make higher education systems more flexible, adaptive and responsive to societal needs, the crucial question becomes what governments should do. Should governments hold on to the formal distinctions between types of higher education institutions, if necessary by legal force? Should governments

refrain from trying to create a certain level of formal differentiation and leave the dynamics of the higher education system to the informal processes of differentiation?

These questions direct our attention to the central subject of this paper: the issue of **governance**. The concept of governance will be discussed here using a similar 'multi-actor approach' as was applied in this paragraph to illustrate the processes of higher education systems dynamics. The outcomes and processes of governance will be assumed to be the result of the actions of, and interactions between a number of relevant actors, especially: higher education institutions, the academic professionals working within these institutions, governmental actors, intermediate organisations (between higher education institutions and government) and the various types of 'consumers of higher education' (students, employers, contractors). The outcomes and processes of governance will be interpreted as another form of systems dynamics. In each and every higher education system a specific **pattern of governance** will be assumed to exist which can be seen as a specific combination of the relationships between the various categories of actors just mentioned. A pattern of governance in higher education is the dynamic combination of the actions of, and interactions between several categories of actors. Using this perspective of governance patterns I will discuss the following elements:

- the extent to which the market can be of influence in higher education systems;
- the steering strategies that can be used by governments;
- the organised influence of the 'academic oligarchy';
- the management processes in higher education institutions.

As a highly relevant feature of governance, and one of the crucial issues in the present discussions on higher education, at the end of this paper the concepts of quality will be especially addressed. But, to be able to discuss governance patterns in the context of various categories of actors, we first have to look at another central concept in the higher education literature: authority.

2 Authority in higher education

It is often noted in the higher education literature that the authority of higher education is ultimately derived from knowledge, and that its governance is determined by the way in which knowledge is handled. Authority **over** higher education and authority **of** higher education are not the same thing. There is some expectation, however, that government policy on higher education should take account of higher education's fundamental characteristics (Van Vught, 1989).

Higher education can be regarded as a social system in which the handling of knowledge is the most crucial activity. From this core activity a number of organisational principles can be derived. The first principle is that knowledge areas form the 'building blocks' of a higher education institution. This principle leads to a fragmented organisational structure consisting of specialized cells that are only loosely coupled.

The second principle concerns the need to diffuse the decision making power. Since the basic production processes in universities and colleges are knowledge-intensive, there is a need to decentralize. As a consequence a university takes more after a federal system or an organisation like the United Nations than a unitary state.

The third principle has to do with the innovative powers of higher education institutions. Contrary to conventional wisdom, change is a crucial characteristic of universities and colleges. The primary processes, teaching and research, are adapted continuously, although in most occasions only incrementally. Because of the fragmentation of tasks and the extreme diffusion of decision making power major, sudden and comprehensive changes are rare in higher education institutions.

The final principle, typical for higher education in Continental European models, is the way authority is distributed. Traditionally authority as regards the primary processes is concentrated at the 'lower levels' of higher education institutions, i.e. at the level of the academic professionals. Responsibility with respect to the procedural matters can be found in the Ministries of Education and

other government agencies. This has resulted in a weak institutional administration. The relative weakness of authority at the institutional level in higher education systems based on the European model comes to the fore when (strategic) institutional decisions have to be taken. Very often such decision processes consume much time, involve a large number of academics and administrators, and result in large numbers of watered-down compromises (Maassen & Van Vught, 1992: 10).

Higher education is not a unified mono-purpose enterprise, but a collection of diverse disciplines and professions, each pursuing its separate goals, aims and interests. The discipline is the basic organisational and political unit within higher education, which itself both structures and is structured by knowledge. It is the academic division of labour based on knowledge that provides higher education with its particular characteristics and poses special problems of management and governance both at the institutional and system levels.

The relationship between higher education institutions and system-wide authority structures clearly influences processes of change and innovation in higher education. But the nature of this relationship, and its effects, have not been adequately examined until recently. Past theories on the ability of higher education institutions to exercise initiative in the context of system-wide authority structures have often been presented on a continuum. At one end of the continuum is the 'bottom-up' type of system where government policy follows rather than leads a change process initiated at the departmental, faculty or institutional level. At the other end of the continuum is the 'top-down' type of system where institutions merely respond to government-inspired policy initiatives which are enforced by the power of the state. 'Bottom-up' systems are characterized by high institutional autonomy and control mechanisms that rest more on a competitive market than on state legislative authority. 'Top-down' systems are characterized by the opposite. Such a conceptualization of change, however, has limited explanatory value (Meek, 1991). The location of a national system of higher education on the continuum may assist in the identification of the relative power of individuals and groups, but this explains little of the dynamics of change.

In a 'top-down', centrally funded, national system of higher education, government is a highly significant actor. But no government has absolute power, or at least, it cannot exercise it absolutely. As was indicated before, governments are themselves part of the higher education system, and their policies are either constrained or furthered by the norms, values and interests of other parties within the system.

Another view of change in the public arena focuses attention on the impotence of government policy: however rational or equitable the goals of public policy, the policies themselves are often rejected or negated by an implementation process trough influenced by entrenched institutional tradition and vested interest (Wildavsky, 1979; Cerych & Sabatier, 1986). Much of the writing in the field of higher education is about the remarkable social stability exhibited by the university organisation despite attempts by governments and others to change it.

Certainly, academia has been a rather stable, socially cohesive and resilient institution since its inception in medieval Europe. But there are occasions when entire higher education systems have been knocked off balance and extensive, fundamental change has occurred. Here, Clark's (1983: 236) definition of fundamental change is useful: 'Particularly in systems where tasks and powers are extensively divided and dispersed, change in structure is what fundamental change means. Structural change modifies who does what on a regular basis; and who decides regularly on who will do what'.

The degree and extent of change in a complex system, such as higher education, is dependent upon the intersection of interests, strategic behaviour, norms and values, and ideologies of all concerned. The question is not solely one of government intervention (effective or otherwise), but one of how and why conditions prevail to the extent that systems do engage in extensive and far-reaching change. Until recently, however, it seems that several governments in their steering strategies on higher education have not realised that they are only one component in the dynamics of higher education. Governmental bodies only form a specific part of a higher education system and governmental bodies only partly produce the higher education system dynamics. Governmental bodies are only one category of actor in a higher education governance pattern.

Two crucial concepts that are clearly related to the way authority in higher education is structured and influenced, and that should be taken into account when governance patterns are discussed in this field, are 'autonomy' and 'academic freedom'.

The question as to what constitutes autonomy in higher education is anything but unambiguous, and the patterns of autonomy that satisfy academics in different countries are very diverse. In exploring autonomy issues it might be useful to make a distinction between academic freedom on the one hand and procedural and substantive autonomy on the other. Berdahl (1990) defines these terms as follows:

Academic freedom is that freedom of the individual scholar in his/her teaching and research to pursue truth wherever it seems to lead without fear of punishment or termination of employment for having offended political, religious or social orthodoxy.

Substantive autonomy is the power of the university or college in its corporate form to determine its own goals and programmes - the **what** of academe.

Procedural autonomy is the power of the university or college in its corporate form to determine the means by which its goals and programmes will be pursued - the **how** of academe.

Berdahl's conceptualization closely relates to Ashby's 'essential ingredients of institutional autonomy' (1966: 296): (a) the freedom to select staff and students and to determine the conditions under which they remain in the university; (b) the

freedom to determine curriculum content and degree standards; and (c) the freedom to allocate funds (within the amounts available) across different categories of expenditure.

For an analysis of governance patterns in higher education (and of the role of government), it is important to know whether the government is intervening in procedural or substantive matters. The former concerns, for example, pre-audits, controls over purchasing, personnel, and capital (large-scale) investments. These matters can be a bother to institutions, irritating and even counter-productive to efficiency, but still usually do not prevent institutions from achieving their goals. Substantive authority matters concern the decisions about the study and research programmes in higher education institutions and are directly related to the ways these institutions try to reach their objectives.

It is questionable where the precise boundaries between procedural and substantive autonomy should be drawn. These boundaries will probably also differ from country to country and certainly also over time. However, it should be pointed out that different steering strategies of government can be considered to have different types of influence on (substantive and procedural) autonomy, and thus have different levels of impact on the authority structures in higher education systems.

In the following paragraphs I will explore the possible nature of patterns of governance in higher education. The first question that will be addressed is to what extent the market can be an effective mechanism of coordination in higher education.

3 Market coordination in higher education

In each and every higher education system, government plays a certain role in developing and coordinating the system. The actual involvement of governmental organisations in higher education, however, can vary substantially. As extreme forms of government's role, a distinction can be made between what has been called the 'facilitatory state' and the 'inventionary state' (Neave & Van Vught, 1991). The concept of the facilitatory state refers to a government underwriting higher education as an opportunity for those duly qualified to have access to higher learning, without actually directing policies at the heart of academia. Patterns of participation, internal governance, and authority are not addressed in the facilitatory state model. The inventionary state on the other hand refers to a government actively involved in attempts to influence such dimensions as the nature of student output (e.g., an increase in technological graduates), the internal affairs of the institution (improving efficiency), and the relationship between an institution and its environment (closer links with industry) (Neave & Van Vught, 1991: x-xii).

The distinction of extreme forms of government's role in higher education may help us to understand the various governance strategies that could be used to influence the dynamics in the higher education systems. It does not, however, provide us with an argument **why** governments should play a role in developing and coordinating higher education systems. For this we have the address the concept of the market as a mechanism of coordination in higher education.

First, governmental steering is a conceptual category which is basicly different from the idea of the market (in its pure form). A crucial aspect of governmental steering has to do with the efforts of government to influence the behaviour of other actors. When steering, government tries to be in charge. 'The market ... is ... a type of interaction in which, in pure form, no one is in charge and matters are desegregated' (Clark, 1983:30). Sowell makes very clear where the differences between governmental steering and the market can be found: 'The government is .. an institution, but the market is nothing more than an option for each individual to choose among numerous existing institutions, or to fashion new

arrangements suited to his own situation and taste' (Sowell, 1980: 41). In the market, decision-making processes are not deliberately structured. No effort is made to design, implement and maintain a specific framework of rules, which sets boundaries for non-governmental (as well as governmental) decision-making units. In the case of governmental steering such frameworks are the most crucial characteristics. Governmental steering implies the structuring of decision-making processes by setting objectives and using governmental instruments. 'The government establishes an army or a post office as the answer to a given problem. The market is simply the freedom to choose among many existing or still-to-be-created possibilities ... The market is no particular set of institutions. Its advantages and disadvantages are due precisely to this fact. Any comparison of market processes and governmental processes for making a particular set of decisions is a comparison between given institutions, prescribed in advance, and an option to select or create institutions ad hoc' (Sowell, 1980: 41).

Concerning the mechanism of market coordination in higher education the opinions (and emotions) appear to differ widely. There are those who argue that the market offers a crucial mechanism for the development of a higher education system. And there are those who point out that the market cannot be applied to higher education.

To let the opponents of the market come first, let us cite Breneman (1981) who argues that a pure form of market coordination cannot exist in higher education because of the following reasons:

> - The 'firms' in this industry are not seeking to maximize profits or to minimize costs for a given level of activity . . .
> - The educational services produced by colleges and universities are not priced to the student at marginal cost, average cost, or even full cost . . .
> - The information available to students about colleges can hardly be considered complete (or even adequate) in many cases . . .
> - Some firms in this industry (the state institutions) receive substantial public subsidies, whereas comparable firms (the independent institutions) do not' (Breneman, 1981, 25).

These arguments do not all have to be accepted at face value. Still, it must be concluded that the author has a point: it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to install a completely market-driven higher education system.

However, the question remains whether the market should be completely rejected as a mechanism of coordination and development in higher education. The economist Stigler (1984) argues that this should not be the case. He even makes a plea to reconsider the similarities between higher education and the market system. ' . . . there is a . . . powerful reason why the intellectual might be sympathetic to the marketplace: the organising principles of both areas are the same. An enterprise system is a system of voluntary contract. Neither fraud nor coercion is within the ethics of the market system. Indeed, there is no possibility

of coercion in a pure enterprise system because the competition of rivals provides alternatives to every buyer and seller . . . The intellectual world . . . is also a voluntary system. Its central credo is that opinions are to be formed from free discussion on the basis of full disclosure of evidence. Fraud and coercion are equally repugnant to the scholar. Freedom of thought is preserved by the open competition of scholars and ideas. Authority, the equivalent of monopoly power, is the great enemy of freedom of inquiry . . . Just as real markets have some fraud and monopoly, which impair the claims for the marketplace, so the intellectual world has its instances of coercion and deception, with the coercion exercised by claques and fashion. But again these deviants are outside the logic of the system. Both areas, moreover, are democratic. The intellectual believes that every willing and able young person should get a good education whatever his race or financial background. The market believes that every willing and able person should be permitted to enter an industry or occupation, whatever his race or educational background . . . . The analogies could be pursued much further . . . I shall merely mention, in passing, that both fields pay a fair amount of attention to packaging and advertising, and both fields place an absurdly high value on originality. There are also many minor differences . . . The basic fact is that the intellectual believes in the free market in ideas and, what is not quite the same thing, in words' (Stigler, 1984, 145-147).

Stigler's argumentation is convincing. But nevertheless (as Stigler himself indicates) we should not close our eyes to the fact that the 'pure' market does not exist with respect to higher education. As a matter of fact, pure markets are more a theoretical construct than an empirical reality. Even in those instances where markets appear to exist, there is always an element of public or government control over them through e.g. anti-trust policies set up to counteract possible negative effects of a certain market, such as monopoly power. Higher education is no exception to this, and quite possibly is even a case for the argument that in fact it would be better to speak of 'market-like' behaviour and the existence of quasi-market structures. Because, even if we distinguish between different types of markets — e.g., consumer markets, labour markets, and institutional markets (Lindblom, 1977) — these are but an approximation of actual markets. The primary processes of higher education — teaching and research —, its positive external effects, and the fact that it can be considered a (quasi) collective good, are such that the price mechanism will not work. This, in turn, implies support of the good through the budget mechanism, and thus a certain amount of government influence and control. Even within the American higher education system, often used as an example of a higher education market system, the government still plays a prominent role in, at least, the public part of higher education. As has been noted by Kerr (1963: 18): 'The market economy reputation and our public attitudes may be quite misleading ... Higher education in our country is often subject to controls not that much different than those found in Europe'. A view that is restated almost 30 years later by Birnbaum: 'If autonomy is in many ways a reality in the private sector, it remains an institutionally desired but unachieved myth in much of the public sector. In both sectors, the Golden Rule of institutional finance and governance prevails: Those who have the gold, rule. The saving grace is that while state steering mechanisms can sometimes be highly intrusive into institutional

affairs, the higher education policies of most state governments appear focused primarily on fiscal accountability rather than ideology or social policy' (Birnbaum, 1991: 137).

In general, therefore, the concept of markets in higher education is best addressed by focusing on the extent to which market-like elements, most prominently competition, are part of the overall workings of the higher education system. These elements can be approached by using the different conceptualizations of the market mentioned above (consumer markets, labour markets, institutions markets). In this sense market-like processes in higher education can be identified by looking at the different actors involved. Examples are:

- the role of students in a higher education system (the extent to which students compete for places and the way in which institutions or national selection mechanisms influence their decisions; but also the extent to which higher education institutions compete for students because of their relationship with the funding mechanism);

- the role of research (the extent to which research grants are allocated on a competitive basis; the extent to which contract research is embedded in the system);

- the role of inter-institutional competition (the extent to which formal or informal hierarchies are part of a system; the extent to which institutional regulation is distributed in a system) (see also: Becher & Kogan, 1991:171).

The conclusion must be that, although market-like processes can be very important in higher education, governments nevertheless have a role to play. In higher education market-coordination and governmental steering will have to be combined into an overall pattern of higher education governance. However, as the distinction between the 'facilitatory' and the 'inventionary' state indicates, large differences can exist in the ways governmental steering and market-coordination are combined in actual patterns of governance.

4 Governmental steering strategies in higher education

Using more or less the same distinctive features with respect to the role of government in higher education as in the distinction between the facilitatory and the interventionary state, Van Vught (1991) has identified two primary traditions in government steering of higher education: the 'state control model' and the 'state supervising model'. The state control model treats higher education as a homogeneous enterprise, with government attempting to regulate all aspects of the dynamics of the higher education system: access, curriculum degree requirements, the examination system, appointment and remuneration of academic staff, etc. The state control model does not recognize the loosely coupled, multidimensional character of higher education. In contrast, in the state supervising/facilitatory model, the influence exercised by the state is weak, with many of the basic decisions on such matters as curriculum, degrees, staff recruitment, and finance, left to the institutions themselves. The state sets the broad parameters in which higher education operates, but fundamental decisions about missions and goals are the province of the system and its individual institutions.

The state control model has a strong tradition in (Continental) Europe. However, in several Western European countries there are signs of changes in the relationship between higher education institutions and government. Governments have experimented with tight regulation of higher education and have been somewhat disappointed with the results. Hence this has led to the argument that if institutions were given, within clear government guidelines, more responsibility to formulate their own missions and goals, higher education would be more innovative and responsive. In several countries in Western Europe a development in governmental steering from state control to state supervision is clearly visible (Neave & Van Vught, 1991). Similarly, in Japan, the government has recently announced a policy to move away from a paternalistic strategy with detailed instructions and guidelines towards broader regulatory frameworks that leave basic decisions to the higher education institutions.

At the same time, in higher education systems where the role of government has traditionally be very limited (e.g. the United States), governmental actors are now becoming more involved in shaping the goals and functions of higher education. It appears, however, that this involvement is concentrated on, on the one hand, maintaining patterns of formal differentiation (cf. the example of California) and on the other hand securing acceptable levels of quality in higher education (see below).

Van Vught (1989) presents some evidence to suggest that the shift from a state control to a state supervision model of governmental steering should be judged positively. The state supervising model appears to be better suited for the higher education context and, therefore, is better able to stimulate innovative behaviour in higher education systems. The state supervision model acknowledges the fundamental characteristics of higher education institutions (the fragmented organisational structure, the diffusion of the decision making power, the incremental nature of changes see before) and tries to make use of these characteristics to stimulate innovativeness of the whole system of higher education. By limiting itself to only global forms of steering and by putting its confidence in the self-regulatory capacities of the professionals and the basic units of higher education institutions, the state supervision model is both more modest and more effective as part as an overall governance pattern in higher education.

A recent comparative study on trends and developments in higher education policy (Goedegebuure et al., 1992) suggested that in Western industrialised nations, a number of governments are either willing to consider stepping back from the direct control of higher education or to take substantial measures to move in this direction. But it also became clear that no government is going to abdicate completely its responsibility to steer the higher education system. The trend is towards steering at a distance – setting the broad parameters for higher education development, while leaving most of the details and initiatives to individual institutions. This is accompanied by deregulation in a number of areas and by more emphasis on market-like competition and the coordination through the market-mechanism.

The shift towards the state supervision model in a number of countries has not been without its trade-offs. At the same time that some governments are giving higher education institutions more freedom of movement, they are demanding the enhancement of internal management efficiency and effectiveness and the institutionalization of measures to assure accountability and quality (see below). But there is little or no evidence to suggest that government action has eroded substantive autonomy, while it appears that in a number of areas, especially in Western Europe, procedural autonomy has been extended.

Rather than viewing autonomy as an absolute, one can regard it as a relational issue involving the balance of power between higher education institutions and government on the one hand, and between administration and the academic profession within institutions on the other. Possibly, direct threats to the substantive autonomy of academic professionals are more closely associated with

the internal balance of power between executive and collegial governance (thus with the way management processes are organised in these institutions) (see below) than with external intervention, though the executive arm of the institution may act as a proxy for government bureaucrats. Institutional autonomy provides no absolute protection of substantive autonomy.

The more governments move towards state supervision the more they will desire the strengthening of management authority (at the institutional level). Neave and Van Vught (1991:242) argue that the recent 'managerial revolution' that has swept through higher education has a number of components to it but few so important as the withdrawal from what has been termed the political model of institutional management. This issue of institutional management will be discussed later. Let us now focus on the most prominent changes in the instruments governments apply to higher education while moving from the state control to the state supervision model.

Funding. Funding is the most powerful instrument available to government for steering and changing higher education systems and institutions. Funding is the golden rule of policy; he who pays the piper calls the tune.

There are several discernible trends in the funding of higher education. First, in nearly all countries all over the world, funding has either remained stable or actually fallen, while student intake has risen dramatically in many countries. This has put heavy pressure on every higher education system and has often brought about rising staff-student ratios and deteriorating infrastructure.

Second, governments are asking their higher education institutions to find non-government sources of funding and to engage in various entrepreneurial activities. This appears to be one of the driving forces behind deregulation and market-like competition. Surprisingly, in several systems, institutions have actually been able to significantly diversify their funding base.

Third, several governments have moved away from earmarked funding to the allocation of block grants. The United Kingdom has even gone one step further by replacing block grants with a system based on the buying and selling of educational services. These movements are in line with the trend towards allowing institutions to set their own priorities and to live with the financial consequences. At the same time, the funding of research has become more targeted towards areas deemed to be of national priority. This is in line with the expectation that academic research has a particular contribution to make to economic development. Also, in several countries, it is expected that business and industry contribute more directly to the funding of research, and that higher education research form stronger links with industry.

Fourth, in several countries the approach of 'conditional contracting' is being introduced. Governments in many countries have realized that public expenditure assigned to the higher education sector has reached its limits. Besides, these governments want to make sure that the budgets for higher education are being

used according to the priorities that government assumes to exist for society. Especially the developments in France are worth mentioning. In this country the 1984 Law (*Loi d'Orientation*) has introduced the instruments of contracts. In 1989 the contract principle was extended to all the activities of the institutions. The French universities are stimulated by the contracts to develop longer term objectives, and by negotiating about these objectives to ensure their fulfilment.

Fifth, several countries are introducing user-pays schemes for higher education. The USA has always had a strong commitment to the principal of individual financial contribution to higher education. But increased student fees, loans and graduate tax are being introduced in countries with a tradition of 'free' public higher education. An increased emphasis on a user-pays policy seems to be driven by two factors: an increased awareness that it are the children of the upper professional families that benefit most from higher education, while the funding of higher education comes from the taxes of the entire spectrum of society; and, once again, the desire to diversify funding. Also, governments often appear to believe that user-pays schemes will enhance market-like competition between institutions for students, and thus improve efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, there is a belief that if students have to financially contribute to their education, they will be more committed to their studies.

The privatization of funding of public higher education is a strong trend embraced with some enthusiasm by many institutions. There is evidence to suggest that a diversified funding base enhances institutional autonomy and freedom of movement. But privatization also has its down-side. For example, commercial scientific ventures can inhibit the free-flow of scientific knowledge, and user-pays schemes can disadvantage certain groups within society.

Planning. The movement towards the state supervision model of higher education is of course not compatible with detailed centralized planning. As a matter of fact the drive towards the model of state supervision is fuelled, in part, by a public disenchantment with governmental planning. And if we look at the results of centralized planning, such as in the area of manpower planning with respect to higher education, the results are not encouraging. However, governments are not completely giving up their planning prerogative. They are merely changing their traditional planning conceptions into forms of 'remote control', thereby transferring the more detailed aspects of the planning process to individual institutions. A prominent example is the Netherlands where a new planning cycle has been introduced recently based on the conception of 'communicative planning' (Maassen & Van Vught, 1988). In these new planning approaches the emphasis is put on organised processes of communication between the various actors involved in higher education. Another feature of the new planning approaches is the importance of flexibility, often realised through processes of monitoring and feed-back during the planning process.

Evaluation. Evaluation in one form or another plays an important role in many higher education systems. Research proposals are evaluated by scientific peers, as are many academic programmes. In some countries, various instruments (such as

performance indicators) are used to evaluate and rank the different academic departments or institutions. Expert committees of review are appointed from time to time to evaluate particular issues and policies.

At the systems level, evaluation is closely tied to issues of quality and accountability. In paragraph 7 these issues will be discussed separately. Here, however, it is worth mentioning that evaluation of higher education in several countries is moving from an emphasis on inputs to highlighting outputs. This brings into play the concept of 'value added'. The argument concerning this concept is that it is not so important what the input into the higher education process is, but what the quality is of what is produced at the output-side.

Regulation. As was already suggested, the trend appears to be deregulation. However, it should be realised that deregulation does not necessarily lead to increased institutional autonomy. Deregulation refers to less governmental legal means in the form of rules and regulations. If the abolished rules and regulations are replaced by general strategies like the 'strive for macro-efficiency', translated into indicators, criteria and targets, the institutions could confront so much uncertainty that in practice they perceive their autonomy to have decreased instead of enlarged. Neave (1988) has used the term de-juridification for this phenomenon.

In addition, higher education is subject to many government regulatory frameworks, a substantial number of which are set outside the education portfolio. Higher education institutions are subject to anti-discrimination laws, industrial acts and agreements, equal opportunity legislation, freedom of information, etc. The important point is that as educational ministries (or their equivalent) move away from direct control of higher education institutions, the institutions themselves must assume more responsibility for managing the regulatory agreements set elsewhere in society.

Having discussed the various aspects of governmental steering in higher education, I will now address a specific aspect of higher education governance patterns: the influence of the 'academic oligarchy' (Clark, 1983).

5 Buffer organisations in higher education

It is often pointed out in the higher education literature that the academic professionals form a powerful oligarchic force in the overall governance patterns in higher education. As Clark notes: 'academics have... transmuted local authority into national power in many systems, with national academics thereby becoming worthy opponents of bureaucrats and politicians in putting hands on the levers of decision' (Clark, 1983: 158-159).

The mechanism in which the academic influence in higher education governance can be most clearly observed is of course the intermediate body or buffer organisation. Other examples of the 'force of academic oligarchy' are the so-called faculty interest organisations (unions, associations) which through various forms of interactions with governmental and political actors promote the interest of their constituencies. Also, the influence of individuals or relatively small groups of individuals, using the authority of knowledge (as consultants and opinions leaders), should not be neglected. But probably the most effective mechanism of academic oligarchy is the buffer organisation, representing academic interests.

In the context of overall governance patterns, buffer organisations in higher education appear to be rather vulnerable. Only if a buffer organisation can sustain itself as a neutral body, standing between the government and the higher education institutions (and especially the academics in these institutions), can it keep its legitimacy in the eyes of both sides. As soon as it gets a 'distinctive tilt towards one or the other', it will confront a crisis of legitimacy (El-Khawas, 1991:12).

Buffer organisations can be regarded as a collective extension of institutional management. In several instances, these types of buffer organisations, where they existed, have either been transformed to serve more directly government interests, such as in the United Kingdom, or removed, like in Australia. The transformation or removal of buffer organisations is often interpreted as a desire on the part of government to have more direct control over higher education institutions and systems. This is only partially true. Many governments faced with severe fiscal

problems are attempting to assume more direct stewardship of the economy, and have regarded statutory intermediary bodies in variety of spheres as cumbersome, wasteful and inhibiting the full play of market forces. The transformation or demise of higher education buffer organisations have been caught up in a more general trend of government disenchantment with statutory authorities. However, there is little evidence to suggest that the removal of buffer organisations has challenged institutional autonomy. In the USA for instance most state governments seem to have rejected the lure of centralized authority (of the so-called consolidated governing boards) in favour of the somewhat greater autonomy embodied in the so-called coordinating boards (Schmidtlein & Berdahl, 1991:8). Most U.S. states appear to prefer the type of buffer organisations that acknowledge the importance of a reasonable level of institutional autonomy.

Examples of buffer organisations dominated by institutional representatives can be found in many higher education systems, both in developed and in developing countries. As was indicated before, whatever the pattern of governance is in a higher education system, a buffer organisation has to try to act as a neutral body. If it fails to do so, it can severely harm its legitimacy. If it succeeds in preserving a neutral position, it may have a major influence on the pattern of governance in a higher education system.

6 Management processes in higher education institutions

The move away from state control towards state supervision, visible in several countries, involves a substantial strengthening of the management of higher education institutions. In the higher education literature this trend is indicated with various labels: 'entrepreneurial management', 'corporative rationality' and 'managerial professionalism' (Neave & Van Vught, 1991:242).

The strengthening of institutional management is to be accomplished by several means: through changes in the composition of governing bodies to make them similar to company-like boards, through the streamlining of decision-making within institutions, providing greater power and authority to chief executive officers, and through changing the nature, task, and role of the democratic institutional senates and councils from control oriented to advice oriented. If institutions are to be more competitive in a market-like environment, then, it is presumed, they must be faster and more responsive in their decision-making.

It appears that the new model of managerial professionalism brings along several features. One is the new balance that seems often to be created between the various constituent interest groups at the institutional level. Especially 'external interest' (regional industry and commerce, social partners) appear to gain increased influence in several countries (e.g. France and Sweden). Another feature is growing attention at the institutional level for strategic management approaches. Enlarged autonomy forces institutions to assume responsibility for their own strategic choices and to formulate long-term plans and institutional missions and profiles. A third feature is the extension of management accountability. The new responsibilities lead institutional managers to the use of sophisticated accountability schemes and output-driven financial allocation models, thereby often creating new tensions within the institutions (Neave & Van Vught, 1991:243-244).

To get a better understanding of the instrumental aspects of the management processes in higher education institutions, I will briefly discuss the same instruments presented in paragraph 4, but now from the perspective of institutional management.

Funding. In many instances, institutions must now manage their own budgets much more so than was the case in the past. Total earmarked funding and centralized accounting procedures do not call for much budgetary expertise. The administration of government block grants and substantial extraneous funds demands a high level of budgetary expertise. If the trend towards deregulation of higher education systems is to continue, sophistication in financial administration must become a top priority for many institutions.

This growing importance of budgetary expertise at the institutional level will bring along more attention for internal allocation models (including the creation of 'internal markets' where departments buy and sell services from each other and from the central administration), for incentives to increase efficiency and for various procedures of internal accountability. The rationale will, in general terms, be the same as the one that is used (in the state supervision model) to transfer responsibility from governments to higher education institutions: budgets are more effectively and efficiently managed if those who are mainly responsible for expenditure are also accountable for allocation.

Planning. While it appears that several governments have moved away from detailed centralized planning, this has forced much more planning at the institutional level. In the state supervision model, the institutions must decide for themselves what their priorities are and how they are going to be achieved. This is no easy task for institutions without a planning tradition. And the setting of priorities is often a painful exercise, for the process must assess both priorities as well as identify strategies for future development.

This growing attention at the institutional level for planning brings along the need for procedures and techniques of strategic planning. It may be emphasized here that, because of their specific characteristics (see paragraph 2), higher education institutions should not automatically take over the strategic planning models that are being used in the private sector. Higher education institutions are confronted with the task to develop their own strategic planning approaches, that fit the organisational characteristics of these institutions (Maassen & Van Vught, 1992).

Evaluation. Internal systematic evaluation of the higher education processes at the department/faculty level is a fairly novel idea for many countries. Although staff-appraisal and (especially in research) peer review are not unknown, the idea of the institutionalisation of evaluation (especially in teaching) on a broad scale is fairly new in most countries, certainly in the developing world. Nevertheless, as institutions take more responsibility for setting their own missions, goals and priorities, evaluation assumes greater importance. Internal research management plans, for example, need to be based on an evaluation of the internal research strengths and weaknesses of the institutions. Obviously, effective internal management also requires the evaluation of numerous other areas of the institution's operation. And, as will be discussed below, evaluation with respect to quality assessment is primarily, though not solely, an institutional activity.

Regulation. Deregulation at the national/state policy level appears to result in increased regulation at the institutional level. If government is going to step back from the direct steering of higher education, then the institutions themselves must take responsibility of the regulatory frameworks once administered centrally. As mentioned above, increasingly institutions are being 'forced' to take responsibility for such matters as: anti-discrimination, industrial agreements, equal opportunity, freedom of information, and personnel policy and staff development. Greater institutional involvement in these areas is sometimes interpreted as a loss of autonomy, but such a stance confuses autonomy with accountability.

7 Quality in higher education

The issue of quality (and the question how the various 'consumers' of higher education are to be assured of quality) has mushroomed as a priority on the higher education political agenda nearly everywhere. But, while it is generally recognized that institutions must be held accountable for the quality of their activities, there is an abundance of different interpretations of quality. According to Birnbaum (1989): 'conflicting definitions suggest two aspects of the quality dilemma. The first dilemma is whether quality can or should be considered by either absolutist or relativistic criteria. The second dilemma is that, regardless of the position taken, the various dimensions of quality often have structural or procedural requirements that are in conflict. For example, improving quality by making undergraduate instruction "better" may require uses of faculty time, delivery system, administrative support and financial resources that would hinder improvements of quality in research or service'. (Birnbaum, 1989: 24)

Theory can do little to resolve the dilemmas produced by the trade-offs inherent in the pursuit of quality, except to suggest that quality priorities and institutional missions ought to coincide. But with regard to definitions of quality, the literature comes down heavily on the side of a relativistic perspective. Quality is a relative concept: multidimensional, interpretive and contextually determined. Quality of higher education 'can only be defined in relation to a set of goals. It cannot be assumed that the goals of different national higher education systems are identical, not even that there will be consensus about goals with any one system. For these reasons, comparisons of quality cannot be hierarchical but should be descriptive of the qualities of different systems. The extent to which qualities are similar across and within systems is an empirical question ...' (Brennan, et al., 1991: 1). From this perspective, the concepts of quality and relevance converge. Quality relates to the degree to which an institution is fulfilling its goals, and relevance relates to the degree to which those goals are applicable to the needs and demands of society.

It is possible (and valuable as well) to assess the degree to which a higher education institution is achieving its stated missions, goals and aims. It also is

possible to assess the relevance of the institution's activities to the needs of society. But if this is to occur, both the goals of the higher education institutions and the needs of society must be pre-specified in such a way that lend themselves to assessment. Also, there should be some correspondence between the goals of the institutions and their relevance to society, otherwise the risky outcome can be that we end up with quality institutions of little relevance, or vice versa. However, in that there are a variety of stakeholders with diverse and sometimes divergent views and interests involved in determining both the goals of the higher educational institutions and the needs of society, specification of goals and needs becomes problematic indeed.

Moreover, while it appears logical to have as much correspondence as possible between the goals of higher education institutions and their relevance to the needs of society, past efforts to achieve such correspondence with any precision have proved to be fairly dismal failures. The poor results in most countries of manpower planning and its use to structure higher education outputs is a good example of how rational, centralized planning in the state control model can go astray. But, given society's investment in higher education, quality and relevance must be assured. How is this to be achieved?

To this there is no definitive answer. Some evidence suggests that the details of higher education missions and goals are best left to the institutions themselves, while the task of government is to set the broad parameters - the social relevance - in which these goals are to be pursued. This approach seems to relate to the state supervision model: 'In a quality assessment system which is in accordance with the state supervising model, government should refrain from trying to completely steer the activities of the higher education institutions. The tasks of government are to make sure that the institutions themselves will operate a quality assessment system, that the needs of society are addressed in that operation and that the institutions respond to societal demand. The actual design and operation of the quality assessment system can be left to the higher education institutions themselves. They should use their autonomy to discuss (and judge) the levels of quality of various teaching and research programmes that are executed by units within the institutions. In those discussions and judgements they should of course pay attention to societal needs. And if they fail to do so, they will be held accountable by government' (Van Vught, 1991: 47).

Quality control begins with institutional self-evaluation. Self-evaluation has several advantages. First, it provides those who must deal with issues of quality, with ownership of the evaluation process (Kells, 1988). This should enhance people's commitment to quality improvement where deficiencies are identified. Second, self-evaluation places members of higher education institutions in more direct contact with both their clientele and the community. All institutional self-evaluations should gather opinions from graduates and employers about the 'product' being produced. Third, self-evaluation 'forces' institutions to identify their goals and missions in such a way that they can be measured. Of course, measurement in the quality management process ought not be seen as an end in itself. Evaluation data are only useful as an input into management decisions about

quality. Finally, self-evaluation recognizes the fundamental characteristics of higher education institutions, based on knowledge production and dissemination. It is the disciplinary expert who is best placed to make initial judgements about quality in his/her area of expertise. Self-evaluation may make use of external peers in specific disciplinary areas; peer review is a fundamental aspect of the academic process. But it is the internal professionals who must ultimately judge and be held responsible for the quality of the knowledge they produce and manage.

This is not the place to discuss in detail models and procedures of quality management in higher education (see: Van Vught, 1991a; Van Vught & Westerheijden, 1992). It is important to point out, however, that the institutionalisation of quality management is a crucial aspect of the pattern of governance being used in a specific country. In this respect at least two issues are at stake. The first concerns the degree to which the bodies that will be involved with the management of quality assessment are independent of both government and the higher education institutions. In a pattern of governance in which government chooses the state supervision model the degree of independence of these bodies should be as large as possible. The second issue concerns the relationships between quality assessment and funding decisions. These relationships should not be too direct to prevent a 'compliance culture' to come into existence. On the other hands if quality assessment is to be taken seriously either at the system or at the institutional level, it has to have consequences.

8 Higher education governance in developing nations

Higher education in many developing countries is in crisis (Coombe, 1991; Salmi, 1991). The optimistic point of view that the expansion of the higher education system is a major condition for furthering modernization and economic growth has lost its attraction. It now often is argued that the higher education policies from the early 1960s on have created unexpected and adverse effects and that new strategies and policies regarding higher education are needed to solve the present higher education crisis.

Psacharopoulos has recently indicated some of the major trends in the higher education systems of the developing world (Psacharopoulos, 1991). He shows that the higher education enrolments have increased dramatically in the period 1950-1987 (see table 1). Between 1950 and the late 1980s, the enrolments were multiplied by 6 in Africa, by 5 in Asia and by more than 10 in Latin America.

Table 1 Higher education enrolment ratio (percent of age group)

Region	1950	1960	1970	1980	Latest 1987
Africa	0.8	0.7	1.5	3.5	4.3
Asia	1.5	2.6	3.5	5.6	7.3
Latin America	1.6	3.0	6.3	13.5	16.9
Europe	2.2	10.3	17.4	22.1	25.2
Northern America	7.2	28.9	45.4	54.3	63.8
Developing countries	..	2.1	3.0	5.7	7.4
Developed countries	..	13.5	23.4	30.3	34.1
World	2.8	5.3	8.5	11.5	12.6

Source Psacharopoulos, 1991, UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, 1980, 1989

However, as Psacharopoulos also notices, the increase of public resources for higher education has not followed the expansion of the higher education systems. The

share of the public budget devoted to education in general has remained constant, if not declined, during the period 1965-1980 (see table 2). The share of higher education in public recurrent expenditure has increased but certainly not *pari passu* with the enrolments in the higher education sector. According to Blair (1992), in Africa the national capacities to finance education dropped as the economic output across the continent during the 1980s declined. 'Although higher education was initially sheltered from this process, by the end of the decade it too had been forced to absorb the impact of sizeable budget reductions' (Blair, 1992: 1).

Table 2: Public spending on education as a share of public budget, major world regions, 1965-80 (percent)

Region	1965	1970	1975	1980
Africa	16.0	16.4	15.7	16.4
Asia	14.2	13.1	12.2	12.7
Latin America and Caribbean	18.7	18.9	16.5	15.3
Europe,Middle East, North Africa	12.4	12.5	11.5	12.2
Developing Countries	16.1	15.8	14.5	14.7
Developed Countries	16.0	15.5	14.1	13.7

Source Psacharopoulos, 1991

The effects of the rapid increase of the enrolments and the lagging behind of the financial resources are dramatic. Quality in teaching and research is declining as a result of overcrowding, inadequate staffing, deteriorating physical facilities, poor library resources and insufficient equipment (Salmi,1991,2). Also from a social equity point of view adverse effects have been noticed. In many developing countries the majority of the students come from the wealthier parts of the population. Hence, the high and middle level income families receive a disproportional share of the public funds for education (Psacharopoulos,1991,6). In Brazil 23% of the education budget goes to 2% of the student population: in Rwanda 15% of the budget goes to 0.2% of the student population (Salmi,1991,3).

Other developments appear to intensify the crisis of higher education. The internal efficiency of many higher education systems is rather low. The costs per graduate and the drop-out rates are high. The percentages of students finishing their studies often are extremely low. The periods students need to complete their studies are often much longer than the official duration of the study programmes. According to the World Bank Report *'Education in Sub-Saharan Africa'*, between one-third and two-thirds of the initial entrants to tertiary education fail to complete their studies or complete them behind schedule (World Bank,1988).

The external efficiency (the relationship with the labour market) also shows that the feeling of crisis is justified. Many developing countries are confronted with the structural problem of graduate unemployment and underemployment.

According to Sanyal these problems are for example found in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Peru and Egypt (Sanyal,1987). It is obvious that the economic recession has had a negative impact on the labour market in most developing countries. However, it is also clear that in many countries an imbalance has grown between the number and types of university graduates and the number and types of available jobs.

The crisis of higher education is also felt in the political arena. In many developing countries student revolts have had a major political impact. Altbach shows that student activism has been a major political force in developing countries all over the world (Altbach,1989). Governments in these countries can not easily change the policy-principles of open admission, free education and job guarantee. These principles, which were established during the 1960s and the 1970s, are now often interpreted as political and social rights. It is not surprising that in for instance Kenya, Nigeria and Sri Lanka a policy of limiting access is implemented with great caution.

The higher education systems in many developing countries have to a large extent acquired their basic characteristics by means of a transference of one or more higher education models from the Western world. Often this transference has taken the form of external imposition, for instance when the British or French carried their higher education systems into their African and Asian colonies or when the Spanish introduced their system in Latin America.

The imposition of the British model in for example India, Jamaica or Ghana, has created higher education systems which, at least initially, were characterized by features of the state supervising model. In these systems the power of national government was limited and the autonomy of the higher education institutions regarding the selection of students and the appointment of staff was respected.

The imposition of the continental (especially the French) model in countries like Thailand, Trinidad or Tunisia meant the introduction of the state control model with a powerful national government, centralized administrative system, civil service employment and a standardization of diplomas and degrees.

The higher education models from Spain and Portugal that were introduced in Latin America, implied the transference of organic ties to both church and state. But because the 'crown' generally held the upper hand (Levy, 1986:13) this imposition brought along a model of strong state control, which was largely inspired by the continental Napoleonic university (Levy,1986).

The higher education systems of the developing countries have come about through transplantation of especially European models under colonial rule. As Thompson has observed regarding higher education in Africa: 'Most African universities are recent European transplants, founded during the terminal colonial period ... and any Africans who were consulted were themselves the products of colonial ... education' (Thompson,1977:282). The forced transplantation of European models has created problems of adaptation when the developing countries

emerged from colonial rule and entered their era of independence. These problems of adaptation were especially caused by the fact that the transplanted higher education systems were alien to the social structure and culture of the newly independent nations and often intensified slumbering social and political conflicts. 'The African universities were high quality, high-cost institutions, somewhat aloof from the rest of the local educational system. They tended to accentuate the already serious cleavages in society by separating students from their local background, conditioning them to an alien life style, and leading them to expect that after they graduated they would be able to command salaries comparable to those in Western industrial countries ... Moreover, their curricula followed metropolitan models so closely that, for example, Ibadan quickly developed a department of classics, but ten years after its foundation no courses were offered in engineering, economics, law, geology, anthropology, sociology, public administration or Arabic and Islamic studies, and it had taken eight years to establish a department of education' (Thompson, 1977:282).

In the eyes of many developing nations the heritage of the European models of higher education more and more became a form of cultural dependence: 'have we achieved political independence only to go on being dominated by alien cultural forms that are inappropriate to our condition and that tie us to international networks controlled by others?' (Clark, 1973:231). In many developing nations the reaction has been to further increase the power of government with respect to higher education. Many new nations wanted to use their higher education institutions as instruments for national development, thereby forcing these institutions to adapt themselves to local needs and circumstances. African leaders for instance (like Nkrumah and Nyerere) called upon the universities to help their nations in the difficult process of societal development (Mwiria, 1992: 2). The African university 'must not pursue knowledge for its own sake, but for the sake of, and the amelioration of the conditions of life and work of the ordinary man and woman. If must be fully committed to active participation in the social transformation, economic modernization, and the training and upgrading of the total human resources of the nation....' (Yesufu, 1973: 82).

The effect of this forced adaptation often has been the clear predominance of the state control model, sometimes leading to rather an authoritarian governmental attitude towards higher education institutions. Even in countries where initially the British model was introduced, the state control model now often has superseded the state supervising model.

In many African countries state authorities have decreed massie increases in student intakes without adequate consultation or resourcing. In countries like Ghana, Uganda and Zambia government heavily controls higher education (Mwiria, 1992). In Asia, centralised and hierarchical government regulation is often indicated as a major problem in higher education. India has introduced (in 1986) a New Policy on Education. However, it is reported that government control of higher education institutions in this country has not decreased and that the new policy (which is supposed to stimulate decentralisation) has not produced major changes. Similar experiences are found in South Korea and Thailand where

government bureaucracy appears to have a negative influence on the functioning of the higher education institutions (International Institute for Educational Planning, 1992: 11,12).

In Latin America the state control model has also been widely implemented. Although major Latin American movements were successful in the first half of this century in achieving university autonomy (and thus were able to decrease the influence of the nineteenth-century state control model transplanted from continental Europe), this success has also often proved to be temporary. The achieved autonomy has frequently been lost, for instance in Brazil in 1964. In Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru coordinating councils at the national level limited institutional autonomy during the 1970s. In Argentina (after 1976), in Chile (after 1973) and in Uruguay (after 1973) the state exercised a very tight control over the universities (Levy,1986). However, the 1990s may bring a process of deregulation (especially in Brazil, Chile and Colombia) (Brunner,1990), which might again install a state supervising in stead of a state control model.

It appears that in developing nations the governance patterns in higher education are to a large extent dominated by the centralized and hierarchical steering strategies of government. In many higher education systems in developing nations the state control model of governance steering appears to be dominant.

Taking the various trends into account that were presented in this paper (on issues like market coordination, the shift towards state supervision, the position of buffer organisations and the changing management processes in higher education institutions), it may be assumed that certain major changes in the overall patterns of governance in higher education systems in developing nations are needed. A modernisation of the higher education governance patterns in developing nations may be an important means to solve the present crisis in higher education in these countries.

Crucial in such a modernisation process will have to be the process of deregulation and the stepping back of government. In the higher education governance patterns in developing nations the autonomy of the higher education institutions should be increased and the management processes in these institutions should be professionalised. Also, more attention should be given to the possibilities of market-coordination in higher education and to the advantages of competition in higher education systems. The position of buffer organisations should be as independent as possible and the influence of the 'academic oligarchy' should be clearly organised.

A discussion on these issues and on the possibilities to develop effective policies with respect to a modernisation of higher education governance patterns is highly relevant for the future of higher education in developing countries. I hope this paper has contributed to opening these issues up.

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